Eureka Mills Site Update
Questions and Answers
February 2002

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is cleaning up residential soil contaminated with lead from historical mining activity at the Eureka Mills Superfund site, located in Eureka, Utah. The site was proposed for the Superfund National Priorities List on June 14, 2001, based on the threat to human health from exposure to high levels of lead and arsenic. Soil sampling of residential areas found 453 lots with soil lead concentrations exceeding 500 parts per million (ppm). In July of 2001, EPA began the cleanup of lead contaminated soil above 3,000 ppm from residential areas. The following is a progress report of work accomplished over the past six months.

1) The November 2001 Fact Sheet on the risk assessment for Eureka seems to suggest that Eureka's drinking water was contaminated. Is the drinking water for Eureka residents safe to drink?

Yes, the drinking water in Eureka is safe to drink. We apologize for any confusion the November risk assessment fact sheet may have caused. The purpose of a risk assessment is to look at "potential" ways a person could be exposed to a harmful substance. One of those ways is drinking water. The risk assessment used the drinking water samples that were collected and evaluated the "potential" for exposure to people. Based on this information, the risk assessment explained how the evaluation was made and what conclusions were reached.

2) How many residential lots did EPA clean up over the 2001 construction season?

EPA has completed work on 25 lots and additional work remains on 19 lots for a total of 44 residential lots. On most of these lots the contaminated soil has been removed and the additional work consists of replacing sod/grass, planting trees, or replacing fences or sheds.

3) Has EPA sampled any more residential lots?

Yes, EPA has done further sampling of residential lots. An additional twenty-three lots were surveyed and sampled. Five of these lots contain surface lead contamination greater than 3000 ppm and will be cleaned up during the 2002 construction season. The remainder, with lead concentrations below 3,000 ppm, will be cleaned up under the Remedial Program of Superfund.

4) Is EPA sampling attics? What is being done to remove the lead-contaminated dirt in the attics?

EPA collected and analyzed dust from four attics from the top of the ceiling material and between the wooden ceiling joists for lead contamination. These attics were sampled because of access to the living space, which increased exposure to the occupants. Dust in the first three attics ranged from 3,000 to 3,800 ppm for lead. A fourth attic contained lead in concentrations up to 1,800 ppm. Lead-contaminated dirt found in three of the attics was removed using a powerful suction machine called a HEPA Vacuum. The fourth attic with contaminated dust is still being evaluated for appropriate action.

5) How much contaminated soil has been removed and how much water has been used?

We have removed approximately 30,468 cubic yards of contaminated soil to the Chief No. 1 mine waste pile. Approximately, 1,789,315 gallons of water has been used to suppress the dust and to water new lawns.

6) What is the schedule for continuing the residential lot cleanup for the 2002 construction season?

Weather permitting we hope to begin cleanup activities in the early spring. During late October 2001, the field work for new design maps was completed for an additional 65 residential lots for the 2002 construction season. EPA is preparing the maps at the present time.

Last year's work began in July 2001 and continued until December 12, 2001, when winter weather prevented further work for the season. Eureka's high elevation (6,400 feet to 6580 feet above sea level), moisture, and temperature prevent grass from being planted after September 1st. Many of last year's soil removals occurred after that date, so there are a number of finish-up items to be completed, mostly hydro-seeding of grass, tree planting, and fence completions.

7) When will more details be available on plans for the soil removals for residential lots with lead levels below 3,000 ppm?

EPA and Utah Department of Environmental Quality (UDEQ) are preparing a "Proposed Plan" that will describe the soil contamination and alternatives for cleaning up both residential and mining areas. The plan is based on a detailed analysis called a Remedial Investigation and Feasibility Study (RI/FS). Both documents will be available for public review. Citizens will have an opportunity to comment in writing or at a public meeting on the Proposed Plan.

CONTACTS

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

Al Lange, On-Scene Coordinator
1-800-227-8917 ext. 6987 or (303) 469-2259,
or 24hr. Emergency no. 1(800) 424-8802
<lange.al@epa.gov>

Paula Schmittdiel, Remedial Project Manager
1-800-227-8917 ext. 6861
<schmittdiel.paula@epa.gov>

Catherine Roberts, Community Involvement Coordinator
1-800-227-8917 ext. 6025
<roberts.catherine@epa.gov>

Utah Department of Environmental Quality

David Bird, Project Manager
(801) 536-4219
<dgbird@deq.state.ut.us>

Dave Allison, Community Involvement Coordinator
(801) 536-4479
<dallison@deq.state.ut.us>

Utah Department of Health

Mark Jones, Lead Program Coordinator
(801) 538-6191
<mejones@doh.state.ut.us>

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
Region VIII, 80C-cr
999 18th Street, Suite 300
Denver, Colorado 80202-2405

Resident
Eureka UT 84628